



Atop Bear Mountain

Along the Appalachian Trail in New York, Green Teams from GW Bridgeport, GW Elizabeth, and GW Yonkers found the spectacular view was not their only perspective changed by hiking to the summit. The thirty youth left any doubts at the mountain's base to conquer a 1,284 ft. challenge and learn about the oldest section of the country's first National Scenic Trail.

Pam Underhill, Superintendent of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and Steve Golden, Program Leader for the RTCA Program in New England, New York and Northern

New Jersey, led the hike and provided interpretive information. Underhill and Golden introduced teams to the National Park Service and wanted to raise their awareness about parks in their area.


"I am amazed at how high we could climb"

-Juan,
Groundwork
Bridgeport

A highlight of the day was meeting two through-hikers. The Green Teams asked them about what they ate and what wildlife they saw, in disbelief that anyone could spend months hiking from Georgia to Maine. However, as the teams continued their own climb they could appreciate the solitude and peacefulness many through-hikers seek. After two hours of strenuous hiking, they reached the mountain's peak to eat lunch and admire the scenic views.

(Continued on page 2)

Green Teams visited a trail reconstruction site with Karen Lutz, Appalachian Trail Conservancy Mid-Atlantic Regional Director. Bear Mountain is considered to have the worst trail conditions on the entire Appalachian Trail, so volunteers are now doing extensive work to improve it. The Groundwork Bridgeport Green Team has an interest in returning to Bear Mountain to help them build an incline trail. The ATC is also making an effort to broaden its constituency and focus on youth involvement.

Team members received an Appalachian Trail pin and information booklet after completing the hike. They were asked to think not only about the physical experience of the hike, but how it can relate to their daily lives. Hours earlier, teams arrived not knowing what to expect and unsure if they could climb the steep mountain. They left Bear Mountain and the Appalachian Trail with a new appreciation for their local National Park and the satisfaction of accomplishing a challenging feat. 

"At the top, the scenery and trees were beautiful. We could see the New York City skyline."

-Shanee,
Groundwork
Bridgeport

"It was something that brought my fellow hikers and me closer together..."

A First Hand Account

**By: Branka Banic
of the Groundwork Elizabeth Green Team**

Hiking Bear Mountain was one of the most wonderful experiences of the 2007-year. For me and my fellow Green Team Members, it was a rare opportunity to leave our own mini urban jungle and to commune with nature such as we are not used to seeing too often. The fresh air, the beautiful view and the woodland creatures added to the magic of the excursion. Hiking the mountain was certainly not easy, but standing there at the top and absorbing all that the natural world had to give was

definitely worth the effort. It was something that brought my fellow hikers and me closer together because nature is not something that we are able to experience in its full splendor in our City. I was very surprised at the fact that there was a National Park in such close vicinity. It really was very endearing to meet people who cared so much about our parks and nature. The day was greatly appreciated by all of us and we will certainly remember it in a very positive light. 